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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1905.

Which Shall It Be?

The News Leader does not correctly in-

terpret the attitude of The Times-Dis-

patch towards the proposed municipal

electric light plant. We are not opposed

to the principle of municipal ownership

of public utilities, although we are op-

posed, as a general proposition, to mun-

icipal operation. But in this case we are

not discussing a general policy of mun-

icipal government. We are discussing a

specific proposition. Shall the city at

this time expend half a million dollars

to establish an electric light plant, to

be operated in opposition to Mr. Gould's

plant? Who knows that such a plant

would pay? Who knows that it would

give cheaper lights to the municipality

or to the people at large? It is at

best an experiment. As the News Leader

well says:

"There would be no sense in operating

a plant which would reduce the citizen's

annual lighting bill while increasing his

taxes more than enough to make up the

difference from present prices. That

would be an absurd taking of money

from one pocket to put it in another."

These are the elements of doubt.

On the other hand there is this much that

is certain: When Mr. Gould came here and

invested in an expensive electric plant,

he did not suppose that he would have

to compete with a municipal plant which

would be operated without taxation. Had

he known this, probably he would never

have invested. He has put millions of

his wealth in Richmond enterprises. He

has invested in no other cities save those

in this immediate vicinity. He has in

contemplation other large investments,

which will add greatly to the wealth and

development of Richmond and vicinity.

He has taken a keen personal interest

in this city, and he is in position to in-

duce other rich men to invest here. He

is one of the largest tax-payers in Rich-

mond, and his taxable values are in-

creasing all the time.

In view of all this, we ask the citizens

of Richmond if it is wise to discourage

such a man by building an electric plant

which will, if it does all that is

CLAIMED FOR IT, destroy the value

of Mr. Gould's plant and drive it out of

business? Is that good policy for a city

that is about to expand its borders and

make a bid for outsiders to come in and

invest? Is it the part of good business to

thwart Mr. Gould in his extensive de-

velopments in order to try a doubtful

experiment in municipal operation? That

is no matter of sentiment. It is business.

But, in any event, let us have a thor-

ough investigation by our unprejudiced

expert from a distance, and let us give

Mr. Gould abundant opportunity to be

heard, before definite action is taken.

Ghirks Vartanian, Citizen.

The investigations of Consul-General

Dickinson into the political status of

Ghirks Vartanian, the Armenian anar-

chist, who has attempted to evade a

death sentence for murder by a claim of

American citizenship, have resulted in

some rather unwelcome disclosures. It

appears that Vartanian is deeply involved

in revolutionary conspiracies against the

Turkish government, and that his stay

in this country some time ago was for

the deliberate purpose of acquiring Amer-

ican citizenship, as a means of protec-

tion in continuing his anarchical plot-

tings. Having remained in this country

long enough to complete the formalities

of naturalization, he went back to Tur-

key, candidly relying, in case of trouble,

on the protecting arm of the United

States government.

The crime for which Vartanian was ar-

rested occurred on August 26th, when, in

company with a fellow "American," one

Afarlan, he murdered a prominent Ar-

menian merchant in the Galata quarter

of Constantinople. Political motives ac-

tuated the crime, Vartanian, upon being

arrested and sentenced by the Turkish

authorities, appealed for the interven-

tion of this country, on the ground that

he was a duly qualified American citizen.

Turkey was at first disposed to

ignore the claim, but later, mainly

through the firm attitude of Mr. Lelsh-

man, the American minister, the Porte

quashed the death sentence and ordered

a new trial. This leniency on the part

of the Sultan was due principally to a

characteristic desire to avoid pushing an

international difference to an issue, and

implied no recognition of the legality of

the American contentions. Any new trial

will now, in all probability, be conducted

by a consular court, or at any rate will

provide for representation from the

American legation. In the meantime Mr.

Dickinson has been permitted to visit

Vartanian in the Constantinople police

station, and has extracted from him the

true facts in regard to his American "cit-

izenship."

The appeal for protection under the

shelter of the Stars and Stripes never

fails to touch a responsive and sym-

pathetic chord in the hearts of our coun-

trymen, and the case of Vartanian has at-

tracted considerable attention. It has

even been of sufficient importance to

lead the officials of the State Department

to consider whether a new naturalization

treaty ought not to be negotiated with

Turkey. Whether such a treaty is a real

necessity is not yet apparent, but in any

case the abuses to which Vartanian's

career has drawn attention require a

check of some sort. This government

can scarcely be expected to tolerate a

state of affairs which permits so gross

an imposition upon its favors. It hardly

expects to stand before the world as the

champion and defender of every foreign

malefactor who has taken the precaution

to become enrolled as a United States

citizen. Our well known sympathy for

Armenians in distress can hardly be

stretched so far as that. Vartanian must

look for relief elsewhere. He appears to

be distinctly not the sort of "citizen"

that this country has any interest in

shielding or desire to encourage in any

way.

Judge Lewis is Proud of It.

Judge Lewis says that he has no

apologies to make for requesting Pres-

ident Grant to send troops to Petersburg

in 1876 "to insure a fair election" in

that city. He declares that he acted

upon the evidence before him and that

he merely did his sworn duty in the

premises.

We do not know what evidence he had,

but Senator Withers said in his speech

in the Senate reviewing the case that

Judge Lewis had not been in the Fourth

District during the entire campaign.

If that was the fact, Judge Lewis acted

upon hearsay evidence, and not upon

his own personal knowledge.

We do not know what that evidence

was, but we do know that Mayor Cam-

eron, who was on the ground and who

knew the situation as well as any man

could know it, protested most solemnly

that there was no trouble, that every

man's rights could and would be pro-

tected by the civil authorities and that

there was no occasion whatsoever for

troops.

Governor Kemper in an official procla-

mation made the same statement, and

was solemnly protested against this un-

waranted usurpation.

But for reasons best known to himself

Judge Lewis disregarded the opinion

and protest of the Mayor of Petersburg,

and without being on the ground, in-

formed the President that the presence

of troops was demanded.

We recall this incident for the purpose

especially of emphasizing the fact that

Judge Lewis in the worst days of Re-

publicanism was in hearty sympathy

and acted with that party and he must

be held responsible for the acts of his

party. "Why does he plead that the

Republican party has changed and be-

come a white man's party? The record

cannot be blotted out. The Republican

party has always been the enemy of

the South and it is not the party to con-

trol the affairs of the Southern States.

The Republican party in its worst days

did nothing more offensive to Southern

people than to send United States troops

down there on election day to rally the

negroes and to intimidate the whites.

Yet Judge Lewis aided and abetted in

bringing troops into Virginia and he

now says that he has no apologies what-

soever to make for his act. Very well.

We do not ask him to apologize, but

we do ask the Democratic party to re-

member that famous affidavit election

day.

Desirable Placards.

Chapter 28 of the Richmond City Code

of 1893 has been amended so as to read

as follows:

"10. Whenever a report is made to the

office of the Board of Health of the ex-

istence of smallpox, varioloid, diphtheria,

scarlatina or typhoid fever upon any

premises, it shall be the duty of the

president of the Board of Health to have

a card placed upon or without such

premises as he may see fit, and in a

conspicuous place so that it may be seen

from the street, stating the name of the

disease, and with such words of precau-

tion as may be deemed necessary by the

Board of Health."

It is eminently proper that a house in

which there is a person suffering from a

contagious disease should be placarded,

but we are at a loss to understand why

a house in which there is a case of

typhoid fever should be so treated. The

president of the Board of Health takes

the same view, and the ordinance should

be so changed as to exclude typhoid.

There is no use in making the regula-

tion any more objectionable than neces-

sary to distressed families.

We are informed, however, that the

Board of Health will place all such

placards conspicuously within the desig-

nated house, so that it may be readily

seen as soon as the front door is open.

Agricultural Fairs.

The agricultural fair at Roanoke is a

great success both in point of exhibits

and attendance. We judge from our

correspondent's account, however, that

the exhibit of men and women is far better

even than the splendid display of live

stock and agricultural products. We

congratulate the enterprising city of the

mountains upon this stroke of enterprise.

We wish Richmond could have such a

fair, and we are not at all sure but what

the old State fair should be revived.

It was in its day a great institution, and

was the means of bringing to Richmond

many fine products of the farm and large

numbers of Virginia men and women.

The Horse Show is a splendid substi-

tute, but why could we not have both

and have them in combination?

A Timely Suggestion.

The suggestion made in The Times-

Dispatch by "A well known citizen,"

that we should invite the National Edu-

cational Association to hold its annual

session here in 1907, is timely and im-

portant. Richmond is an educational cen-

ter, and it would be worth a good deal

to the educational interests of this city

and of the entire State to have this

great national organization meet here

for the discussion of educational topics.

It would be especially appropriate to

have it meet here in the year of the

centennial of the American Revolution.

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shelter of the Stars and Stripes never

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